

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Replacement drawings are submitted for Figures 10-16
labeling these figures as Prior Art.

REMARKS

The application has been amended to place the application in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The specification is amended to make editorial changes therein.

Replacement drawings are submitted for Figures 10-16 labeling these figures as Prior Art. These changes are the only changes and do not introduce new matter.

Claims 1-17 were previously pending in the application. Claim 1 is canceled and new claims 18-20 are added. Therefore, claims 2-20 are presented for consideration.

Claims 1-3, 11, 12, 15 and 17 are rejected as anticipated by NEARY et al. 5,274,533. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 is amended and rewritten in independent form and recites a pair of lamp holders. A plurality of elongate lamps extend parallel to one another and are supported by the lamp holders. An optical rod extends parallel to the lamps and is interposed between an adjacent two of the lamps and is supported by the pair of lamp holders. Support for the new limitations may be found on page 9, line 21 to page 10, line 6 and page 10, lines 15-16.

NEARY teaches a removable section 100 that the Official Action indicates as an optical rod member. While the

interpretation of this V-shaped removable section 100 as a rod member appears overly broad, nevertheless, element 100 of NEARY is not an optical member supported by the lamp holders as recited.

Rather, as seen in Figure 11 of NEARY, only the lamps 466, 468 are supported by lamp holders 464, 462. As is seen by comparing Figure 11 of NEARY with Figure 2 of NEARY, element 100 is supported by light reflecting sections 20 and 60 and connected thereto by latches 106, 108 as seen in Figure 4. The lamps extend beyond element 100 and are then supported by the lamp holders 462, 464. NEARY neither teaches an optical rod member nor that such rod member is supported by a pair of lamp holders as recited.

As the reference does not disclose that which is recited, the anticipation rejection is not viable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 12 is amended and recites a pair of lamp holders directly supporting at least one lamp and a rod member. The analysis above regarding claim 1 is equally applicable to claim 12.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-10 and 16 are rejected as anticipated by HAYASHI et al. JP 2002-184231. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 is amended in independent form and recites a pair of lamp holders. A plurality of elongate lamps extend parallel to one another and are supported by the lamp holders. An optical rod extends parallel to the plural lamps and is supported by the pair of lamp holders.

HAYASHI teaches a plurality of cold cathode-ray tubes 2b-2e (lamps) and a plurality of light guides 6a-6e that the Official Action has indicated as optical rods.

However, HAYASHI does not teach that the light guides 6a-6e are supported by a pair of lamp holders that also support the lamps. Rather, as seen in Figure 31 of HAYASHI, the light guide 6 is between lamp support 4 and not supported by the lamp support.

As the reference does not disclose that which is recited, the anticipation rejection is not viable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 13 and 14 are rejected as unpatentable over NEARY et al. in view of WEATHERS 6,210,019. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

WEATHERS is only cited for the teaching of a rod member being electrically grounded or electrically connected to a terminal of an elongate lamp. WEATHERS does not teach a pair of lamp holders directly supporting a lamp and a rod member as recited in claim 12. As set forth above, NEARY does not teach or

suggest what is recited in claim 12. Since claims 13 and 14 depend from claim 12 and further define the invention, the proposed combination of references would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Claim 7 is rejected as unpatentable over HAYASHI et al. in view of BROER et al. 5,729,311. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

BROER is only cited for the teaching of a layer of diffusing particles in an optical waveguide. BROER in Figure 7b, for example, teaches waveguide 11 between lamps 9, but does not teach that the lamps and waveguide are supported by a pair of lamp holders as recited in claim 2. As set forth above, HAYASHI does not teach or suggest what is recited in claim 2. Since claim 7 depends from claim 2 and further defines the invention, the proposed combination of references would not have rendered obvious claim 7.

Claim 4 is rejected as unpatentable over HAYASHI et al. in view of LEE U.S. Publication No. 2002/0044437. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

LEE is only cited for the teaching of projections that extend to the diffusion plate.

However, LEE does not teach that for which it is offered and in any event does not teach or suggest what is recited in claim 2.

Claim 4 recites that the optical rod member includes an extension extending from the rod member to abut the optical diffusion plate. In LEE, as seen in Figure 4, diffusion plate supporter 60 extends from mold frame 10, not from an optical rod member. Therefore, combining LEE with HAYASHI as suggested would entail a diffusion plate supporter extending from the frame of HAYASHI, not from the rod member of HAYASHI.

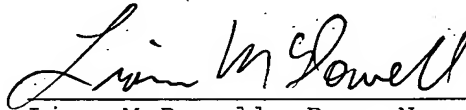
In any event, LEE does not teach or suggest an optical rod member being supported by a pair of lamp holders as recited in claim 2. As set forth above, HAYASHI does not teach or suggest what is recited in claim 2. Since claim 4 depends from claim 2 and further defines the invention, claim 4 would not have been obvious in view of the proposed combination of references.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX:

The Appendix includes the following items:

- replacement sheets for Figures 10-16